

From: carmine mangione
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 1:43pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

The proposed Microsoft settlement must be stopped for the following reasons:

It fails to address the single most significant factor in Microsoft's abuse of monopoly power: their use of file formats to limit alternatives to their products, force consumers to upgrade to the latest version, and extend their hegemony to other markets.

Microsoft's word processing product, Word, uses an unpublished, undocumented and non-standard compliant .doc format. Microsoft has changed this format no less than 5 times over the past 10 years. These changes force everyone in an organization to upgrade to the latest version of Word if a single user upgrades. These upgrades are often forced with purchase of new equipment or upgrades of seemingly unrelated components such as the operating system as Microsoft only supports the latest versions of their software.

Microsoft's half-hearted attempts to allow users save documents in previous versions fail for two reasons. First, the 'save as' option often loses valuable formatting information and second, they do not change the extension name of the format as other vendors do. For example, .doc95, .doc98, and .doc00 make it clear which version a file is saved in so a user can send the correct version out. Microsoft, mysteriously saves all files as .doc. Most other vendors change their extensions when they make changes to file formats that may break older version.

The solution:

1. Require microsoft to publish their file formats and to publish and open for review any format changes through one of the independant standards bodies.
2. Require Microsoft to provide free upgrades to all previous versions of thier software that will allow those versions to read any new formats flawlessly.

Thank you,
Carmine Mangione